

Quill & Scope

Volume 9 *Volume IX*

Article 4

2017

Selected Poems

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Recommended Citation

Fraychineaud, T. (2017). Selected Poems. *Quill & Scope*, 9 (1). Retrieved from

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Selected Poems

Thomas Fraychineaud

Medicinal Fruit

Who eats the fruit that falls from the trees,
and litters the campus of NYMC?

Blanketed paths from Grasslands to class, are
shells of green fruit and black walnut branch.

I took for granted the trees and the fruit,
right in the backyard of our short commute.

But when life hands you apples, what do you do?
Collect and arrange them like dusty wax fruit?

Of course not! Better make sauce,
eat it straight from the pot. I mean really,

It was not under the "tree of Hippocrates"
that Newton knew suddenly something of gravity.

Nor was it the blossoms to tempt Adam or Eve,
that aroused all-American John Appleseed.

Committing to memory things of anatomy,
while ripe fruit falls and rots with the leaves.

Autumn's not the end to deciduous trees,
but after the apples are no guarantees.

Tchesinkut Lake

Lake burps in winter
Echo centuries below
Ice skating romance.

Sheep fields

Commuters from the city come to walk the fields,
fields with trails that deer and fox take during the night,
trails we replaced with an asphalt path.

A man in tennis shoes herds sheep around the field,
sheep that replaced lawnmowers that replaced sheep
and have been around for decades but -- millennia after the sheep.

Each day, this bench, routinely I count the walkers.
Today after counting only this man, I think about sheep,
trails, and things maybe we did right the first time.



M.S. is not the “no-myelin disease”

On one side he wrote, “autoimmune disease: no myelin.”

On the other side: Multiple Sclerosis.

This is the kind of superficial understanding

I’ve actually come to appreciate from strangers who learn I have M.S.

But not from my son, home for spring break from medical school,
studying for the board's next month.

Had he forgotten the time he waited with me for three hours on the trail

when I couldn’t feel my legs and had to stop?

Or the time when I couldn’t get off the ski hill

but refused to be taken down on a ski patrol sled?

Did he remember me when I didn’t have nystagmus,
slurred speech, and difficulty articulating myself?

I played basketball in college.

I went heli-skiing for fun.

I prided myself on my physical ability.

And I am proud of my son; he will soon be a doctor.

But it hurts to see something so devastating to my life
be reduced to four words on a notecard.